

Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

****** Consumer Advisory ******

Terry Goddard Offers Tips on Charitable Giving

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Dec. 14, 2005) It's that time again. The year will soon be over, and many people are writing end-of-the-year checks to charitable organizations.

Attorney General Terry Goddard reminds Arizonans to be careful when donating, especially in response to telephone or door-to-door solicitations. Some of these requests, made in the name of charity, are outright scams.

"It is the holiday season, and a time for giving," Goddard said. "Asking a few questions and checking on the organization before giving is important to ensure you know who you are giving to and that your contribution will be used as intended."

Goddard offers the following advice to consumers considering a charitable gift:

- Ask questions about the organization soliciting funds. A legitimate charity will be happy to provide information about its work.
- Do not make cash donations. Always make contributions by check. Make your check payable to the charity, not to the individual who may be soliciting the donation.
- Remember to ask for a receipt and a tax deductible statement.
- Know the organization. Be careful of charities with names that sound impressive or resemble those of other organizations. Some scam artists use names similar to those of well-known organizations to confuse donors.
- Find out how a charity will use your contribution. Ask for information about its programs and for a copy of its financial report. Ask what percentage of the funds will be used for programming and how much will be spent on administrative costs. Reputable charities will be happy to provide this information.
- If you have any doubts about a charity, check with the Secretary of State to ensure it is registered as a non-profit.

- Be very skeptical of anyone asking for an immediate donation by requesting your credit card numbers or bank account information over the phone.
- Be wary of calls soliciting funds that coincide with important national or local events, such as devastating fires or national tragedies. Fraudulent fund raisers will try to take advantage of your sympathy for those who suffered during the event.

“There are many great charitable organizations in our community that deserve our support. I want to make sure Arizona consumers are careful to protect themselves and not enrich scam artists,” Goddard said.

Arizona consumers who believe they have been a victim of a charitable scam can contact the Attorney General's Office at 602.542.5763 in Phoenix; 520.628.6504 in Tucson; or 1.800.352.8431 outside the metro areas. An online complaint form is available on the Attorney General's Web site at www.azag.gov. To file a complaint in person, the Attorney General's Office has 17 satellite offices throughout the state with volunteers available to help. Locations and hours of operation are posted on the Attorney General's Web site.

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